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LETTER DATED 14 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached letter dated 13 October 1997 which I have received from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee established pursuant to the mandate of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB).

Attached to the letter is the fifth periodic report of the Member States participating in MISAB, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1125 (1997) of 6 August 1997. I should be grateful if you would bring the letter and its enclosure to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 13 October 1997 from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: French]

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the fifth report, covering the period from 1 to 15 October 1997, requested by the Security Council in paragraph 6 of resolution 1125 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic.

(Signed) General Amadou Toumani TOURÉ
Chairman of the International
Monitoring Committee

Enclosure

[Original: French]

Fifth report to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1125 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic

(13 October 1997)

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the fifth report which the Security Council requested the Member States participating in MISAB to provide pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1125 (1997).

2. This report describes developments in the situation in the Central African Republic from 1 to 15 October 1997.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

3. The International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, chaired by General Amadou Toumani Touré, is the body which directs the actions of MISAB, since it receives the necessary political guidance directly from the heads of State concerned, and especially from the President of the Gabonese Republic, who is Chairman of the International Mediation Committee.

4. The International Monitoring Committee has adopted a plan of action which reflects the gist of the main provisions of the Bangui Agreements in the form of a timetable, which can be outlined as follows:

- Formation of a government of national union;
- Adoption of an amnesty law covering those who committed offences in the context of the third rebellion;
- Disarmament (surrender of weapons by the former rebels in honour and dignity, and recovery of weapons by MISAB from militias and civilian populations);
- Implementation of the recommendations of the General Meeting on National Defence;
- Situation of former heads of State;
- Suspension of the parliamentary audit;
- Final phase of national reconciliation through a number of actions aimed at consolidating peace and security (organization of regional

and sectoral awareness-raising seminars, organization of a National Reconciliation Conference, elaboration of an electoral code, access by political parties to the State media and other measures).

5. MISAB is under the patronage of President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, senior head of State of the International Mediation Committee. It is under the political authority of General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BANGUI AGREEMENTS

Implementation of the amnesty act covering offences relating to the third rebellion and the misappropriation of public funds under investigation

6. As indicated in earlier reports, the amnesty act, which was promulgated on 15 March 1997, was implemented with a great deal of pragmatism and understanding as regards the sanctions to be taken against citizens who might have been illegally in possession of weapons following the 15-day deadline established by the law. This pragmatism enabled the International Monitoring Committee to negotiate with the former rebels and to persuade them to hand over their weapons with honour and dignity. It also facilitated the organization and operation of the awareness-raising and weapons recovery campaign among the civilian population between 12 August and 3 October 1997 under the direction of the Technical Commission on Disarmament, headed by the Minister to the Office of the Minister for Territorial Administration, who is responsible for public security and disarmament.

Disarmament

7. This is, without a doubt, the most delicate phase of the national reconciliation process. The operation has two major components which have made it possible to carry out this operation effectively: (a) the awareness-raising and voluntary participation phase and (b) the investigation, intervention and implementation-of-the-law phase. The voluntary participation phase was the preliminary period which ended on 30 September 1997 as stipulated in the ministerial order of 5 September 1997. Its purpose was to raise the awareness of the Central African people by a campaign conducted on the radio, television and in the written press and also by putting up banners and posters bearing slogans supporting peace, national unity, national reconciliation and disarmament on the main roads of Bangui. Any patriotic citizens who turned in their weapons of their own accord were rewarded for doing so, in order to encourage all the other ones to return any weapons they might have had in their possession. It should be pointed out here that this was in no way a weapons buy-back operation.

8. After recovery of the weapons of the former rebels, the second phase of disarmament involved collecting weapons from civilians, militias and illegal holders of weapons. For this purpose the International Monitoring Committee, in agreement with the Government of the Central African Republic, recruited 10 resource staff (deputies, neighbourhood leaders, former rebels, opinion leaders) as chairmen of local disarmament committees in their respective zones. This

staff, following deployment to districts, established disarmament committees in each neighbourhood. Their role was to inform the local population through neighbourhood meetings, rallies, talks, discussions and small gatherings and neighbourhood visits, so as to convince the population of the need to turn in illegally held weapons.

9. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), thanks to the constantly expressed commitment of its Resident Representative in Bangui, Mr. Pierre Etienne Ly, established funding in the amount of 40,000 United States dollars (using funds from project CAF/97/001) for the 10 resource staff, dignitaries, neighbourhood leaders and opinion leaders. People voluntarily turning in weapons or helping in their collection received a token reward. The reward, in the amount of 2,500 to 5,000 CFA francs ($5 to $10) according to the type of weapon, was intended primarily to exonerate civilians turning in weapons. There were special terms for heavy weapons: CFAF 15,000 to CFAF 75,000 ($30 to $150), depending on the type of weapon.

10. The investigations, intervention and implementation-of-the-law phase began immediately after the first one. It involves collaborating with informers compensated according to the quality of their information. This will make it possible to locate any weapons caches. During this second period, which actually began on 3 October 1997 after the head of State granted an extension, anyone found to be illegally in possession of a weapon is to be handed over to the authorities. In addition, MISAB will conduct searches, together with the national defence and security forces other than the presidential security force.

11. Political parties of every persuasion signed a declaration and issued a joint appeal to the Central African people on 30 September 1997, calling on the people to commit themselves resolutely to the way of peace and national reconciliation while surrendering any military weapons they might possess illegally. This marked the first time since January 1997 that the political parties of the presidential majority and those of the moderate and radical opposition have managed to endorse jointly a document of such importance.

12. Since the signing of the truce agreement on 28 June 1997 and the ceasefire agreement of 2 July 1997, the following weapons have been turned over to MISAB:

Heavy weapons

Designation	Quantity	Increase (29 September-13 October 1997)
120 mm mortars	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 4	
81 mm mortars	surrendered: 13 out of a total of 15	4
60 mm mortars	surrendered: 13 out of a total of 19	1
14.5 mm machine-guns	surrendered: 6 out of a total of 6	
12.7 mm machine-guns	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 3	
75 mm recoilless guns	surrendered: 2 out of a total of 2	
73 mm anti-tank rocket launchers	surrendered: 66 out of a total of 67	
Rocket-propelled grenades	surrendered: 7 out of a total of 11	
Total	surrendered: 111 out of a total of 127	5
	(weapons recovered: 87.40 per cent)	3.93 per cent

Light weapons

Designation	Quantity	Increase (29 September-13 October 1997)
Hand-guns (misc.)	surrendered: 15 out of a total of 111	4
Submachine-guns	surrendered: 297 out of a total of 459	46
Assault rifles	surrendered: 256 out of a total of 541	15
MAS 36-49/56-M14 rifles + muskets	surrendered: 650 out of a total of 1,181	45
Light machine-guns	surrendered: 52 out of a total of 80	1
.30-calibre machine-guns	surrendered: 15 out of a total of 17	2
Total	surrendered: 1,285 out of a total of 2,389	83
	(weapons recovered: 53.78 per cent)	3.47 per cent

13. The relatively low rate of recovery of light weapons can be explained as follows:

(a) These are light personal weapons that are easily transported and have been taken out of Bangui;

(b) Some of these weapons were probably buried: efforts to dig them up are continuing as information is provided, with varying degrees of success;

(c) Others, particularly hand-guns (automatic pistols), are easily camouflaged and may have been sold to as yet unidentified persons;

(d) Still others may have been taken from the State arsenal during the second rebellion (May 1996) and were never returned before the outbreak of the third rebellion;

(e) An indeterminate number of light weapons that have not yet been found may have been thrown into the Ubangi River or into the forest by former rebels fleeing in June 1997 after encounters with MISAB;

(f) It should be noted that some former rebels, roughly comprising a company (132 men) and all armed with light weapons, never returned to their barracks. According to knowledgeable sources, many of these may have left the Central African Republic taking their weapons with them.

14. The recovery of light weapons is thus slow, despite intensive efforts by the neighbourhood disarmament units and the active collaboration of many upright citizens.

15. A quantity of munitions of various types was recovered and packaged. The status of these munitions as at 13 October 1997 is set out below:

Designation	Quantity	Remarks
5.56 mm rounds	69 084	+468
7.5 mm SLC rounds	14 000	
7.5 mm S/B rounds	117 347	+12 452
7.5 mm X rounds	34 000	
7.5 mm X S/B rounds	135	
7.62 mm rounds, NATO	15 962	
7.62 mm Kalashnikov rounds	39 007	+25 145
7.62 mm long rounds	121 260	+763
7.62 mm Tokarev rounds	2 810	+1 910
9 mm Para rounds	5 299	+1 815
.12-calibre riot control rounds	711	
12.7 mm rounds	728	+457
14.5 mm rounds	15 322	+1 130
37 fragmentation hand grenades	1 847	+97
Fragmentation hand grenades, China	2 898	+228
GR FLG AP34	16	+13
RPG 7 rockets	1 131	+691
.37 stun hand grenades	1 043	+59
FL LAC F4 hand grenades	1 300	+18
F4 hand grenades	316	
Russian grenades	1	
60 mm mortars	1 713	+8
81 mm mortars	834	+167
120 mm mortars	102	+45
75 mm recoilless rifle rounds, US	168	+2
75 mm recoilless rifle rounds, China	223	No weapons in inventory
M79 40 mm rounds, US	6 060	No weapons in inventory
Time fuses (inactive)	2 325	
7.5 mm grenade cartridges	755	No rifle grenades
Pyro detonator	6 100	

	Results of the fourth report	Results of the fifth report	Increase
Munitions, various types	228 758	317 138	+38.63 per cent
Explosives and detonators	9 895	17 321	+75.04 per cent

A significant quantity of miscellaneous munitions, handed over loose, not suitable for firing, will be destroyed by the competent weapons and munitions units. An analysis will be made available in due course.

Recommendations from the General Meeting on National Defence

16. It appears that quite a few of the claims made by the former rebels could be answered by responsible implementation of the 282 recommendations made at the General Meeting on National Defence which was held in August 1996 at Bangui. That is why the International Monitoring Committee, true to the spirit of the Bangui Agreements, proceeded, in April 1997, to set up an ad hoc committee to examine the said recommendations carefully and to set up a schedule for their implementation, breaking them down into categories according to what could be applicable in the short, medium and long terms, based on the sensitivity of the areas to which the recommendations relate and, above all, the financial resources that would have to be mobilized. The results of the work of the ad hoc committee, which was chaired by a leader of the opposition, General Timothée Malendoma, a former prime minister, have already been transmitted by the International Monitoring Committee to the Ministry of Defence for implementation at the various relevant levels. Since the International Monitoring Committee is merely a mediating body, it must leave the decisions on these matters to the relevant Central African authorities, while remaining ready to serve as arbitrator should the need arise.

Situation of former heads of State

17. A revised bill was submitted by the Government to the National Assembly. Assurances were given to the International Monitoring Committee delegation by the expanded bureau of the National Assembly at the meeting on 4 September 1997 that the bill would be considered during the first weeks of the current session of the Assembly, which began on 1 October 1997.

Suspension of the parliamentary audit

18. The Bangui Agreements call for the suspension, then the abandonment "of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit" opened in respect of persons presumed to have misappropriated public funds under the previous regime, for it was understood that the audit had been conducted in a very selective manner and was creating more problems than it was resolving. The International Monitoring Committee, respecting the spirit of the Bangui Agreements, proposed that the Central African Republic should, by a legislative act, formally renounce

proceedings against authors of offences identified by the parliamentary audit. It was generally agreed that such an act would undoubtedly be taken in the context of the next session of the National Assembly.

National reconciliation

19. Each of the points mentioned above constitutes as many phases on the road leading towards national reconciliation. The present section therefore concerns the final phase of this exciting process.

20. The International Monitoring Committee, supported by UNDP, is already engaged in making preparations for awareness-raising seminars, symposia and meetings; the first phase will take place at the provincial level and be targeted at specific groups (such as trade unions, women's organizations and youth movements), and the second phase will take place nationally, in the form of a national reconciliation conference, as recommended by the Bangui Agreements. For this purpose, the Committee is working in close cooperation with the Minister for Human Rights, National Reconciliation and Promotion of a Democratic Culture, who chairs the technical commission on awareness-raising under the patronage of the Prime Minister. At the weekly meeting, held on 27 August 1997, the participants appraised the cost of each of the activities in question and targeted potential sources of funding. In this regard, the Central African Government, the International Monitoring Committee and UNDP are determined to involve the backers closely in the activities scheduled to be carried out under the process of national reconciliation.

21. A timetable of activities covering the period 1 October to 1 December 1997 (the national holiday of the Central African Republic) was prepared jointly by the Minister for National Reconciliation, the UNDP Resident Representative and the International Monitoring Committee. This will be useful in coordinating the many activities to be carried out in this last phase of the process that began with the signing of the Bangui Agreements.

22. In the context of the restructuring of the Central African Armed Forces, the International Monitoring Committee had requested UNDP to set up a fund to assist military personnel wishing to leave active service in returning to civilian life, and UNDP had agreed to do so. UNDP launched a project on demobilization, retraining and reintegration for the Central African Armed Forces, which would enable 1,000 soldiers to return to civilian life in decent conditions and make it possible to reduce the cost of operating the armed forces and facilitate their restructuring. All Member States and international organizations may make contributions to the fund in question, which will initially be for an amount of approximately $2 million. The official signing of the project is planned for Monday, 13 October 1997, and activities are expected to get under way two weeks later, with the arrival of the international experts.

23. A first estimate indicates that 1,000 or more soldiers will be involved in this project. UNDP has proposed Mr. Gustave Fernando González Gasques as head of the project. A national of Argentina, he has solid experience in the area of demobilization and reintegration of former soldiers into civilian life. He has managed this type of activity in Nicaragua, Mozambique, Liberia and Angola. His candidature has been accepted by the Central African Government.

COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL AFRICAN AUTHORITIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

24. An important meeting was held on 30 September 1997 between the International Monitoring Committee and the Group of 11 Opposition Parties at the latter's request. The items included in the agenda of the meeting related mainly to various aspects of the Bangui Agreements which have not yet been implemented or are still pending, such as the situation of the former heads of State, the surrender of weapons by "the ex-rebels, militias and all other unlawfully armed individuals", the drawing up of an electoral code and other issues of current concern. On that occasion, the Group of 11 Opposition Political Parties reaffirmed its desire to see the Bangui Agreements "fully implemented" and reaffirmed its support for the mediation efforts of the International Monitoring Committee.

25. The Group of 11 Opposition Political Parties met once again with the International Monitoring Committee on 9 October 1997 to discuss a number of matters, the most important of which were the new electoral code, the future of MISAB in the event of a possible withdrawal by the French Operational Assistance Personnel (EFAO) and the social problem.

26. The new electoral code recently produced by a national commission that included representatives of all political viewpoints has given rise to a disagreement over the presidency of the National Electoral Commission. The Group of Eleven has requested the International Monitoring Committee to arbitrate in the matter. The next report will include information on the outcome of the contacts which the Committee has had with the various parties concerned.

27. Both the national and international press have recently given prominent coverage to reports of the imminent withdrawal from Bouar and Bangui of the EFAO, i.e., the French troops. This information is the subject of active discussion in political circles in the capital of the Central African Republic, including the Group of Eleven. Many people here believe that the withdrawal of the EFAO based in Bangui would mean the de facto elimination of the logistical support which France has provided to MISAB since its deployment in the Central African Republic, and they call upon the International Monitoring Committee to use its influence to bring about a satisfactory solution of the problem. The great concern felt in political circles is that they will be powerless to prevent the sudden departure of MISAB owing to a lack of logistical support.

28. In spite of a statement issued on 9 October by the spokesman for the President of the Republic, which was intended to reassure public opinion in the country, the matter is so serious that the National Assembly at a meeting held on Friday, 10 October 1997, posed a parliamentary question to the Government of Action in Defence of Democracy. The impression which emerges from the lively discussion in the National Assembly is that the Central African political community does not understand why it should be necessary for President Patassé to demand the sudden withdrawal of the EFAO. The various diplomatic steps taken parallel to the parliamentary question have helped to make a start on solving the problem. In any event it has become clear that the logistical support of

France for MISAB will not be wanting. The consensus which has emerged between the majority and the opposition on this issue bears mentioning.

29. At the same meeting on 9 October, the Group of Eleven drew the attention of the International Monitoring Committee to the social problem. The Group of Eleven fears that the strike movement which began in the public schools last week may have a ripple effect on other sectors, since no solution has yet been found to the dramatic problem of outstanding back wages owed to workers in the public sector.

30. The International Monitoring Committee and MISAB were invited to participate in a special commission, beginning on 5 October, in seeking a viable and satisfactory solution to the transfer of the school for the children being raised by the Army to an appropriate site with a view to settling the delicate question of this group of young people in the Central African Republic, which is a breeding ground for future members of the Armed Forces. It should be mentioned that some of the children attending the school had joined the ranks of the rebels. The school building which accommodated the children was virtually destroyed during the rebellion and the children have since become ripe for recruitment into a life of crime. Police reports even indicate that some of them have fallen in with the gangsters who not long ago were riding roughshod over the city of Bangui.

LOGISTICAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL MONITORING COMMITTEE

31. As indicated in paragraph 40 of the fourth report (S/1997/759, annex), project CAF/97/001, through which UNDP contributes its logistical and technical support, was originally to be terminated at the end of September 1997 for lack of funds. However, the Resident Representative of UNDP in Bangui has just notified the International Monitoring Committee that additional resources ($130,000) have been allocated by the Emergency Response Division of UNDP and that consequently UNDP had decided to continue providing its logistical and technical support to the International Monitoring Committee so that it could carry out its mission until 31 December 1997.

32. The International Monitoring Committee welcomes this decision by UNDP, which will enable it to initiate and continue its activities in the new stage it has entered in the implementation of its plan of action:

- Political monitoring of the pursuit of operations to disarm the former rebels first in Bangui and later in other parts of the country;

- Consideration of the situation of the former heads of States;

- Abandonment of the judicial enforcement of the parliamentary audit;

- Coordination of activities relating to the organization and conduct of various seminars and conferences provided for in the context of national reconciliation;

- Solving of problems arising in the execution of the project on demobilization, retraining and reintegration for the Central African armed forces.

Obviously, if, as is highly likely, the activities of the International Monitoring Committee extend beyond 31 December, additional financial assistance will be necessary.

33. As pointed out in paragraph 4 of this report, with a view to the systematic and consistent implementation of the Bangui Agreements the International Monitoring Committee drew up a kind of plan of action to be carried out according to a timetable originally intended to cover the month of June. Various events, in particular those of 22 and 23 March 1997, 30 April to 2 May 1997, and 20 to 24 June 1997, seriously disrupted the course of the mediation by creating a climate of mistrust and suspicion which the Committee is called upon to manage with respect to the political aspects and which MISAB has become responsible for monitoring with respect to the security aspects. This state of affairs is the main reason for the delay that is now evident in the implementation of the other actions provided for in the timetable, all of which are aimed at strengthening the newly restored peace and helping democracy to become firmly rooted in the country. Undeniable progress has been made in implementing the Bangui Agreements, but there is still a long way to go in carrying out all the main provisions of the Agreements.

34. At this time, most of the weapons taken from the state armouries during the third rebellion have been returned, but suspicions remain that other weapons illegally imported by the political parties are present in the territory of the Central African Republic. Only the International Monitoring Committee with its neutral and impartial status can resolve the situation in order to pave the way for the peaceful conduct of the electoral campaigns and the elections.

35. The social situation in the country remains tense. Students at the University of Bangui have been going on strike from time to time because the Government is six months behind in the payment of study grants. The academic year did not begin, as scheduled, on Monday, 6 October, because teachers are demanding the payment of back wages before they return to work. Some trade union groups are threatening to go on strike if "nothing is done" to pay them "six months' back wages", wages which have gone unpaid since January 1996.

36. While the mediation efforts have achieved encouraging results in the political, military and security areas, the situation in the social sphere remains problematical and may set everything back to square one. It is well not to lose sight of the origin of the crisis which broke out in April 1996 with purely corporatist demands being made. Everybody knows what happened after that.

37. The analysis of the situation by the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB coincides with the views expressed by the population of Bangui in general and those of the political community (across the board) in particular. Indeed there is unanimous support for the maintenance of the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB for a further three-month period, beyond the final date set by the United Nations Security Council in resolution 1125 (1997). It is to be

noted that this is also the wish of the central authorities of the Central African Republic, namely, the President of the Republic and the Government of Action in Defence of Democracy.

38. The International Monitoring Committee stands ready to provide, in an impartial and neutral manner, any information and clarifications which the Security Council or the United Nations Secretariat might wish to receive.

39. MISAB, which is deployed throughout the city of Bangui, is ensuring security in all neighbourhoods of the Central African capital by occupying 20 surveillance posts, and is carrying out patrols nightly in each of the city's eight districts. The activities of MISAB have been extended, with the agreement of the parties concerned, to operations to maintain security in the various neighbourhoods. Since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement on 2 July 1997, MISAB has participated, on the basis of a consensus, in joint security patrols with approximately 120 men, consisting of MISAB personnel and Central African security and defence forces in all districts of Bangui. Apart from the security patrols, which have brought peace and quiet to Bangui, MISAB is the only force to receive requests for assistance from all neighbourhoods in the city.

40. In spite of the re-establishment of peace, in order to be absolutely sure of the situation, MISAB continues to provide security and escorts for convoys to supply fuel, a strategic product to be delivered to all the stations of PETROCA, the national petroleum products distribution company, from the Kolongo fuel depot, which is located in an area previously controlled by the former rebels.

41. It should be noted that the crime rate in Bangui and the surrounding area has continued to fall. There has been a distinct improvement in the security situation with the deployment of MISAB. There has been a considerable relaxation of tension, and Bangui is looking more and more like a peaceful city. Economic and cultural life and organized sports are resuming, as are international contacts.

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE MISSION

42. As indicated in the previous reports, MISAB receives logistical support from the participating States, France, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Government of the Central African Republic.

CONCLUSIONS

43. The current experience with the Central African crisis is unique and is all the more stimulating in that it is unlike any previous experience.

44. It is fortunate that UNDP has been understanding enough to maintain its logistical and technical support for the International Monitoring Committee so that it may continue to fulfil its mission. The Committee pays tribute to UNDP for its willingness to cooperate, without which the current experience would have been only an illusion.

45. It is strongly recommended that the mandate of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements be extended for a further two- or three-month period, beginning on 6 November 1997, the date on which the current mandate given by the Security Council in its resolution 1125 (1997) expires, in order to continue to ensure security and consolidate peace until the elections are held in 1998. It would be desirable to consider, at the current stage, changes in the size of MISAB and the possibility of giving it a new status as a United Nations observer mission.

46. It must be pointed out that, owing to the insufficiency of the African countries' own resources, logistical support from the international community, along the lines of the support which France has provided to MISAB and which remains open to contributions from all other States, is still needed. The International Monitoring Committee and MISAB welcome the understanding of this issue expressed by the Security Council after its consideration of the previous reports. They hope that the appeal made to the international community by the President of the Council will be met with action.

47. It is fitting to mention here the ways in which life in Bangui and the rest of the country has returned to normal (or nearly so); yet one major problem remains, namely, the failure to pay back wages, pensions and study grants, and it is, in some ways, undermining the successes achieved so far. The result has been to create an ugly social mood in the country. In this connection, it must be recognized that the Government has, come what may, managed for some time now to pay a month's wages each month, even though it is not yet in a position to solve the sensitive issue of back pay.

48. All these factors demonstrate how difficult it is in the present circumstances for the Central African Republic to honour both its domestic commitments (payment of wages, pensions and student grants) and its external obligations, in particular the arrears owed to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Special one-time assistance from one or another country to pay off these arrears, which could reach more than 6 billion CFA francs (or more than US$ 120 million) by 31 December 1997, would give a great boost to the Treasury of the Central African Republic. And it would have a positive effect on peace-building in the Central African Republic. In the meantime, further efforts are needed to reform the various tax collection agencies through the establishment of a mechanism for more rigorous oversight. Technical assistance from abroad could effectively help the Central African Republic to bring about significant improvements in the situation in this area.

49. Bangui has entered a new era with determination, an era marked by a gradual rebuilding of confidence and the resumption of activities in numerous spheres, which is a sign that peace has been restored. That peace must now be consolidated, by taking into account all the suggestions put forward in this report in the form of conclusions. The International Monitoring Committee, for its part, will continue to spare no effort in urging all the parties to the Central African crisis to work for the effective implementation of the Bangui Agreements, as required by its mandate and as regularly called for by the Security Council.

50. For practical reasons, it is respectfully requested that the Security Council authorize the International Monitoring Committee for the Bangui Agreements to draw up periodic reports on a monthly basis, beginning in November 1997.